

**TOPIC: POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS
ENDORSED DEPILOMA CRITERIA**

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I. SUMMARY

This agenda item requests that the Commission approve Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) endorsed diploma criteria. The criteria were developed by a Task Force created by the Department of Higher Education and Colorado Department of Education. .

II. BACKGROUND

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-7-1009 and 22-7-1017, the next steps of implementing Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) calls for the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to jointly adopt high school diploma endorsement criteria indicating a student's level of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness. A PWR endorsed diploma identifies student excellence over and above a standard high school diploma. It signifies a student has thoughtfully planned for post-high school life, and is academically prepared for credit-bearing 100-level postsecondary coursework without the need for remediation. A PWR endorsed diploma also means the student possesses the abilities and skills demanded in a rapidly changing, 21st century workplace or postsecondary education environment (*i.e.*, critical thinking and problem solving, information literacy, collaboration, self direction, and invention skills).

The proposed criteria were developed by a task force, created by DHE and CDE staff in August 2011. Department staff worked extensively with the Task Force members and key stakeholders to develop and vet the proposed criteria with a wide variety of stakeholders from both P-12 and institutions of higher education. CCHE voted to approve the criteria in 2012. In addition, the criteria were approved by all governing boards of higher education and pilot programs are underway. The Endorsed diploma is voluntary; districts can choose to offer endorsements or not.

A student who graduates with a high school diploma that includes a postsecondary and workforce readiness endorsement shall be guaranteed:

- (a) To meet minimum academic qualifications for admission to, and to be eligible, subject to additional institutional review of other admission and placement qualifications, for placement into credit-bearing courses at all open, modified open, or moderately selective public institutions of higher education in Colorado; and
- (b) To receive priority consideration, in conjunction with additional admissions criteria, and to be eligible, subject to additional institutional review of other admission and placement qualifications, for placement into credit-bearing courses at all other public institutions of higher education in Colorado. The additional admissions criteria shall be determined by each institution of higher education.

The criteria are described by the following four indicators:

1. STUDENT IS COLLEGE READY IN MATH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS – student meets existing remedial education benchmarks, is ready for credit-bearing coursework in math and English language arts
2. STUDENT COMPLETES ICAP – student establishes and maintains an Individual Career and Academic Plan, per SB09-256
3. STUDENT DEMONSTRATES 21st CENTURY SKILLS
4. STUDENT DEMONSTRATES MASTERY OF ACADEMIC PREPARATION – student selects three content areas aligned to their post-high school goal, and demonstrates college readiness in these three areas, at a minimum.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommend adoption of the Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Endorsed Diploma criteria, as proposed. A local school board, BOCES, or institute charter high school may apply if these entities choose to endorse high school diplomas to indicate that students have achieved postsecondary and workforce readiness.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

22-7-1009(3)

23-1-108(7)(a)